RICE George R. Brown School of Engineering

ENGI 501: Workplace Communication for Professional Master's Students in Engineering

Spring 2020
M/W 14:00-15:15/GRB W211
Ginger Vaughn

Contact Information

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Office hours: By appointment

Overview

This course provides the fundamentals of professional communication useful in daily business correspondence, securing an internship or job, and relaying information in a business or academic setting. It is designed to help you write and speak clearly and more effectively during presentations, conferences, and in the workplace. This course focuses on written communication such as emails and proposals which can improve your communication abilities during your graduate studies along with sharpening your writing and presentation skills. More specific topics are listed in the attached course schedule below.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course will equip students with strategies to communicate more successfully on the job. Students will improve their written, oral, visual and interpersonal communication skills through formal and informal assignments, in-class activities, practice, and feedback.

Students who complete the course will be able to:
- Analyze essential components of written and oral communications
- Think critically about context, audience, and purpose to develop a communication strategy
- Produce documents such as email, summaries, proposals and short reports
- Prepare and deliver short oral presentations
- Engage in discussion (ask and answer questions, respond to others' contributions)
- Run a meeting
- Design effective visualization of data (figures, tables, slides)
- Communicate confidently in professional and interpersonal situations

Course Materials

Materials for this course will be provided in-class and through Canvas.

Grade Policies

Writing assignments: 55%
Oral presentations: 35%
In-class participation and workshops: 10%

Assignments:

Communication Assignments

- Biography, CV, Cover letter
- Professional Emails: Persuasive email to internal and external audiences
- Journal summary: 1 page summary of an academic journal paper
- Technical Report: Review and revise an existing technical report
- Proposal (draft and final): 4-5 page proposal that identifies and defines a specific problem or need and presents a plan to address it. You will need to cover the problem/need, current situation, objectives, implementation, risks and benefits.
- Goals and self-reflection: 1-2 page assessment of your written and oral work in the course. Identify strengths and weaknesses, set goals, and formulate an action plan

Presentations

- Impromptu presentations: Frequent informal 1-2 minute presentations in which you tell or sell (elevator pitch, introductions)
- Introduction presentation: 2 minute informal presentation in which you introduce a classmate.
- Summary presentation: 2-4 minute presentation of your written summary (see assignment above).
- Storytelling presentation: Presentation in which you tell a story about a meaningful experience which includes appropriate slides, images, etc.
- Proposal pitch: 2-4 minute presentation in which you pitch your preliminary proposal idea to a group of peers to solicit their input in a meeting format.
- Proposal presentation: 5-7 minute presentation based on your written proposal (see assignment above).

Workshops/Activities

- Professional networking event: Attend an event (on or off campus) and summarize your experience along with meaningful contacts and follow-up plans.
- Informational interview: Request and attend an informational interview with a company or organization that is related to your field. Summarize your experience with the interviewer(s).

Absence Policies

You are permitted three unexcused absences. If you will miss class for coursework, consult with instructor in advance.

Rice Honor Code

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at http://honor.rice.edu/honor-systemhandbook/. This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

Disability Resource Center

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Disability Resource Center (Allen Center, Room 111 /adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.